

1776 Continental Currency Dollar in Pewter,
Variety 1-C, with Plain Edge and Large Planchet

On behalf of Joseph P. O'Hara our opinion has been requested by Mark M. Werner as to the above coin for authentication and comment.

The series of 1776 Continental Currency dollars consists of pieces struck in ~~brass~~ brass, pewter and silver, all of which are either rare or very scarce. The design for the dies are derived from the fractional dollar varieties of the paper money authorized by the Continental Congress by resolution of February 17, 1776 and ~~were~~ extensively issued. The dies were cut by Elasha Gallaudet, an engraver of illustrations who was inexperienced in die cutting. There is no mention of the coinage in any records of the Continental Congress or other governmental documents. The coinage was never put in circulation but ^{some} may have been distributed to members of the Continental Congress for examination. ~~They are~~ usually categorized as trial or pattern pieces. There are four known in silver, ~~septem~~²⁰ in brass and ~~about~~ 150 to 250 in pewter. The pewter ~~has a legal percentage of~~ ten. A detailed variety classification was written by me in 1951.

The O'Hara piece ~~is~~ obverse die (sandieg) with the misspelling of CURRENCY ~~is~~ die variety 1-~~C~~ and the reverse with 13 linked states with the spacing error ~~is~~ involving the N in AMERICAN is ~~is~~ die variety C. The obverse die, after use with reverse dies A and B and a few of C, developed a crack over the G I in FUGIO which crack enlarged as more were struck. The O'Hara piece is in the early stages of the crack. The reverse die C was originally cut as reverse A and was modified by recutting into reverse B and further modified into reverse C.

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The edges of all pewter pieces have a continuous raised floreal design, probably rolled on by a casting machine before striking the faces. The O'Hara piece has no edge decoration. Both faces of all pewter pieces have a ~~circle~~ circle of dots at the ~~the~~ circumferential border, parts of which circle are not always visible on the planchet because that part of the die extended beyond the circumference of the planchet. In pewter strikings space outside the circle of dots does not appear. In the O'Hara coin the flat space outside the circle of dots clearly shows.

The O'Hara coin weighs 18.97 grams. It has a specific gravity of 7.25 which is ^{in the range} ~~normal for~~ ^{normal} pieces. Its horizontal diameter is 42.5 mm and its vertical diameter is 42.0 mm. It is the largest pewter planchet we have seen, having about the same diameter of the Spanish-American 8 real pieces over which the silver 1776 Continental Dollars are struck. If the O'Hara piece obverse is turned on its vertical axis the reverse is rotated about 20 degrees clockwise. The obverse border space beyond the circle of dots is much larger on the left side and the top than on the right side and the bottom. On the reverse the border space ~~is~~ ^{is} larger beyond the ~~the~~ circle of dots is larger on the right side than on the left side.

The condition of the O'Hara coin is superb. It has ~~a~~ beautiful natural ~~silver~~ silver gray toning with a bright gloss which choice uncirculated examples of other pewter examples have. It ~~is~~ is sharply struck and shows no wear. It has a ~~tiny~~ tiny ~~tiny~~ circular mark ~~over R in CURRENCY~~ over R in CURRENCY. On its edge it has two file test marks done by others in the past to check its genuineness. Its edge has a slight offset from 9 to 11 o'clock when observed from the obverse and this seems to have occurred in the preparation of the planchet before striking. We have not had a chemical analysis made because Walter Breen when he sold you the piece on behalf of First Coin Investors in 1976 stated that it was done and its results were the same as those with which we are familiar. An article written by Michael Hodder gives many testing results but does not mention the O'Hara piece.

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The O'Hara coin in our opinion is clearly genuine and this confirms the opinion of Walter Breen. We have examined many ~~of~~ Continental Currency dollars, genuine and forged, uncirculated and worn, and have no reason to think the lack of an edge decoration (a common defect of many forgeries) is other than natural in this instance. The O'Hara piece has no characteristics of casting or electrotyping and is clearly a die struck coin. It is unique so far as we know as to pewter planchet size and as to lack of edge decoration on pewter coinage. Its provenance and prior history is known to us only through the written comments of Walter Breen made in 1976, when it was stated that the O'Hara coin ~~was~~ first ^{became} known in 1963.

It is not ~~a~~ ^{for us} to speculate as to why ~~any piece was made~~ the O'Hara piece was made in its existing form as we have no facts to guide us. A larger than normal ^{repolished} planchet was cut for some reason and the coin was struck between other pewter strikings.

We hope we have been helpful.